

Mountain Plains Journal of Business and Technology

Volume 21
Issue 1 *Highlighting Leadership*

Article 11

Date Published: June 2020

Mike Ettore, Trust-Based Leadership: Marine Corps Leadership Concepts for Today's Business Leaders

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Recommended Citation

Palmer, N. (2020). Mike Ettore, Trust-Based Leadership: Marine Corps Leadership Concepts for Today's Business Leaders. *Mountain Plains Journal of Business and Technology*, 21(1). Retrieved from <https://openspaces.unk.edu/mpjbt/vol21/iss1/11>

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Mike Ettore, *Trust-Based Leadership: Marine Corps Leadership Concepts for Today's Business Leaders* (Fidelis Press, 2019), 576 pages, \$30 paperback.

An opportunity to read about trust and its importance in leadership piqued my interest in this book. I expected content in the manner of Dirks & Ferrin's (2002) seminal work on trust in leadership, or follow-on work by Colquitt, Scott, & LePine (2007) who examine trust and the influence of leaders as trust referents. Yet, the book is less about trust-based leadership and more about "Marine Corps leadership concepts."

Before I go much further, you should know I have been in the military, the U.S. Army, for more than twenty-five years. Thus, some may suggest an underlying bias—against the Marines. Not true, but all I can do is promise to be objective.

If the book is not about trust-based leadership, what is the reader actually getting? From the author: "This book is a training manual. I want to *teach* you how to become a World-Class Leader..." (27). Ettore's *Trust-Based Leadership* is a brand, with his manual presenting a leadership philosophy built from lessons learned as a leader in military and corporate settings. Many are insightful, and some are cliché.

Ettore frames his leadership philosophy with a specific context, à la Section I: Marine Corps Leadership, which is a 187-page overview of Marine Corps terminology and doctrine. In this section, Ettore sprinkles in applications of Marine concepts to business—a nice addition to a section I would otherwise skip (after all, I started the book with the idea of learning more about trust—not the Marine Corps). It was not until page 194 that a clear definition of the "Trust-Based Leadership" model was given: "...a business-oriented leadership doctrine based on rapid, flexible, and opportunistic decisions and actions." This quote better summarizes Ettore's core lesson, with trust implied and serving as the lubricant that makes his model of leadership work.

The idea of trust as a lubricant is not new (see Bennis & Nanus, 1985), but that does not invalidate Ettore's contribution. Indeed, he does something quite interesting, but it is glossed over because of the "Trust-Based Leadership" brand he is promoting. Of greater interest, in Section II, Ettore writes about applying principles of war to business—speed, objective, economy of force, unity of command, and simplicity. If, however, an organization wants to do this, then Ettore's caveat holds true: it is *trust* that enables an organization to operate according to the principles of war.

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